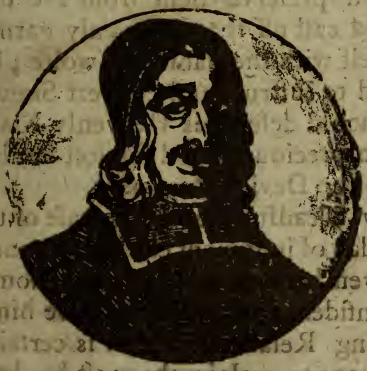
# THE EXECUTION OF THE Rev. Pete Vine

eing an impartial account of the Life, Character Behaviour, and laſt Dying Words of the Rev. Peter Vine, Vicar of Heartland, who was Executed at Heavy Tree Gallows, in the County of Devon, on Monday Auguſt 8th, for a Rape and Murder, the firſt, committed on the Body of a Child Eleven Years of age, belonging to Mrs. Dark, in the aforeſaid county, and the Second, on the Body of Roger Aſhton, who went to apprehend him, after he had committed the Fact; with the remarkable Speech he made to the Populace, at the Place of Execution. Together with a Prayer he made uſe of, while under Sentence of Death. To which is alſo added a Copy of Verſes.



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EXECUTION

OF THE

# Rev. Mr. Peter Vine.

IT muſt certainly have a diſmal ſhock to all Chriſtians eſpecially thoſe of the Clergy, when they heard of the inhuman actions of the Rev. Mr Peter Vine, a Gentleman who once was reſpected by every body for his ſeeming good behaviour both to God and man, he was greatly reſpected by the Gentry, who was very deſirous of his inſtructions in their family, and more eſpecially by the mother of the unhappy child, Mrs. Dark, who was very deſirous of his company, that he might inſtruct her Daughter, (who was about eleven years of Age,) in the principles of Religion.

He who was ſent to be a meſſenger over a flock, to guard and preſerve them from the devouring Beaſt, ſhould caſt off that Heavenly garment, and clothe himſelf with the habit of a wolfe ; One who was deſign'd to inſtruct and convert Sinners to repentance, ſhould deſert his Heavenly Maſter, who ſhed his own precious Blood for loſt Souls, and liſt himſelf into the Devil's Regiment.

I ſay how dreadful then is the caſe of this man, who at the day of judgment can find no one to plead for him ; even his new Maſter, in whom he once put ſuch confidence in, will then leave him : I hope the following Relation, which is certainly true, may be a means to reclaim the moſt hardened Sinner on Earth.

This unhappy Gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Peter Vine, was Vicar of Heartland in the county of Devon, and went frequently to Mrs. Dark's who always desir'd his company, that he might instruct her Daughter, which he seemingly did to all outward appearance.

There was a pleasant Garden belonging to the house in the which they walked together; and one day the gentlewoman leaving the child, and the wolfe in sheep's cloathing by themselves, he being prompt by the instigation of the devil, he ravished the Infant, at which time the child screaming out, he made his escape over the garden wall. The mother of the child coming up, saw her daughter in a horrid state, and in a terrible fit; the sight of which struck her with such a surprize, that she swooned away, and lay till one of hor servants came to know what occasioned her stay. As soon as she came to herself, she sent in search of him, but he could not be found. The mother fell sick with grief, and the infant lay indisposed for some time, as soon as the gentlewoman was recovered, she promised a reward of Twenty Guineas for any one who should find him out, so that he might be apprehended and brought to Justice.

He absconded from his habitation near 3 months and notwithstanding he was acquainted with the reward that was offered for his being secur'd, he ventur'd home on Sunday the 17th of April, and had the undaunted assurance to swear by G--d that he would shoot the first man, who should attempt to take him: The neighbourhood being inform'd of his coming home, sent word to Mrs. Dark, who

immediately went to Justice Saltern, who granted her a Warrant to apprehend him, and the constable to him she gave it, took one Roger Ashton and William Blake to assist him.

When they came to the house they found they could have no admittance without violence, and with much difficulty at last they entered the house, and then was obliged at last to break open several Locks before they came to the room where he was the first that enter'd it was Roger Ashton, who seeing the Prisoner with a pistol in his hand made up to him, but before he could come at him, Vine discharg'd it, and shot him dead on the spot; Then the other two secur'd him, and being carried before Justice Saltern he was under examination two hours

The justice first informed him of the abominable crime laid to his charge, and said with a seeming tenderness that there had been a too sufficient proof of his being guilty, he could not believe it, for says he, the sad condition of the infant and your flying from justice, thoroughly confirms your guilt He appeared very undaunted, and strongly denied the fact laid to his charge of the Rape; before his committimus was finished his aged Father came, who accosted him in the following manner, with what a load of grief have I at last arrived at, to see this dreadful sight of infamy, and you which curst my very soul to see, should be the sole occasion of it. O! that I had died in my mother's womb, that I could not have seen the sea of sorrow; you in whom lay all my delight and pleasure of this life, now proves the destroyer of it. Having repeated these words, while floods of tears bedewed his cheeks. He was sent home and put to bed where he lay ten

days before he expired.

On Monday the 25th Instant, he was tried at the Guild-Hall for the City of Exeter, for the aforesaid Rape and Murder, and found Guilty, but did not seem daunted in the least whilst under Sentence of Death, was pronouncing against him, and said he did not fear dying, for that he was entirely innocent of the Rape, and as for the murder he stood in his own defence.

On Thursday the Warrant for his Execution came down to him for his Execution on the Monday following, which he did not seem to mind, but hoped as he was innocent to have forgiveness from Almighty God, who was able to reward him, for all his sufferings on Earth.

He was near 35 years of age, born of honest reputable parents, he was son of Mr. John Vine, of Heartland in the county of Devon, who spared no cost to accomplish him in the practice of Divinity, and as soon as he was put in Orders, he was made Vicar of Heartland. His Father doated on him, and thought himself to be one of the happiest Parents in the whole Universe. His behaviour was seemingly good while under sentence, and was often heard to say the following Prayer.

*PRAYER.*

O God who hath no given Laws to be Traps and snares not on purpose that they may be broke, and poor mortals be brought under the Lash of the Law and be sentenced to damnation, hear me O Lord and have mercy upon me, for I have sinned against thee; I heartily pray and beseech thee, in the bowels of thy mercy to look down from Heaven upon me thy poor servant, whom thou hast chose a Shepherd to watch thy Flock and whose sins be infinite and innumerable, most heinious and insupportable, but as they be grievious without number so is thy Mercy more abundant and without End Turn

not thy Face away from me that lies prostrate, lamenting for his sinful Life before thy Mercy gate; which thou dost open wide to those that do lament their sins; O shut it not against me Lord, when I depart this sinful World: but let me enter in and call me not to a strict account how I have lived here, Thy Mercy is above all thy Works; more able to save than my sins to condemn. Therefore, O sweet Saviour, for thy bitter Death and passion and for the Glory of thy Name, be merciful unto me, and forgive me all my Sins, as I heartily repent, and the Lord Jesus Christ remain with me now and for evermore AMEN.

He was so well respected among his Parishoners that he was invited to dinner at one house or other almost every Day. All good Chistians that knew him, thought it was an honour to be in his company, his conversation was so good, and certainly he bore a fine character before committing of the rape and murder. Whilst under Sentence he would not suffer any Clergyman to come nigh him saying if the learning and Education, which I receceived from my tender indulgent Father is not sufficient, I ought not to receive no Mercy from the hands of my offended God.

AT THE PLACE OF EXECUTION.

The Morning of his Execution, he behaved with a becoming decency, and after receiving the Blessed Sacrament, he walked to the fatal Tree, in a black suit of mourning attended by the Sheriff's Officers, and a numerous Crowd of spectatort, and as soon as he mounted the Ladder, he spoke in the following manner.

Loving People.

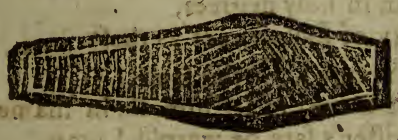
I SEE here are numbers of you assembled to see me depart this sinful Life, in shame, and as I am a dying Parson, no doubt but you expect to hear something of the Fact for which I suffer, especially from me who was sent as a Messenger from God,

to inſtruct his people, and not to learn them more Wickedneſs, by breaking into evil paths, and following not his righteous ways,

I ſay as there is a juſt God, who ſitteth on the Judgment ſeat of Heaven, before whom I muſt preſently appear to anſwer for all my ſins, that I am not guilty of the Rape which I am charged with committing on the body of Mrs. Dark's Child I own I committed the murder on the body of Roger Aſhton, but that I ſtood in my own defence, therefore I think I have the leſs ſin to anſwer for, becauſe he never told me his buſineſs when he came to take me, and I being in fear of being robb'd, diſcharg'd the piſtol which ſhot him dead on the ſpot.

As for my abſconding, it was on account of my father's ill ſtate of health, on whoſe Death there was an hundred pounds depending, and who is dead ſince with grief for this unhappy affair. I pray God be with you all, and beg of you all to pray for my departing ſoul, and deſire you to ſhun all treacherous perſons company. In doing which, you will do good both to God and yourſelves.

After reading prayers, and ſinging a Pſalm he was turned off the Ladder, crying, the Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit.



FINIS.

# A Copy of Verses,

YOU tender Chriſtians all of high & low de-
Stop a few moments and liſten unto me, (gree
A ſhocking tale you now ſhall hear,
Will ſurely draw forth many a tear.

In Heartland town its known full well,
The Rev. Peter Vine he there did dwell,
Miniſter of that Pariſh Church, was he,
Reſpected by all of high and low degree.

A widow lady in this ſame town did dwell,
Had a daughter eleven years old ſhe loved full well
To this Miniſter ſhe ſent without delay,
To have her brought up in virtuous ways.

Surely the devil muſt him Poſſeſs,
For to commit ſuch wickedneſs,
On her he did commit a rape,
And left her in a ſhocking ſtate.

A reward was offer'd then with ſpeed,
They went to apprehend him for this deed,
Soon as the room they entered,
He quickly ſhot one of them dead.

When at the Bar he did appear,
The Court with horror was filled we hear,
To ſee a man in holy degrees,
Found Guilty of ſuch crimes as theſe.

Now he's Executed for the ſame,
Great numbers went to ſee him die in ſhame,
By this Miniſter's fate be warn'd I pray,
Never let your paſſion's lead you aſtray.

J. Pitts, Printer.